



## No.ONE - preparing for meditation

serenum**design**® is delighted to present this first in a series of e-booklets by Mark Bouckoms designed to support you in your meditation practice.



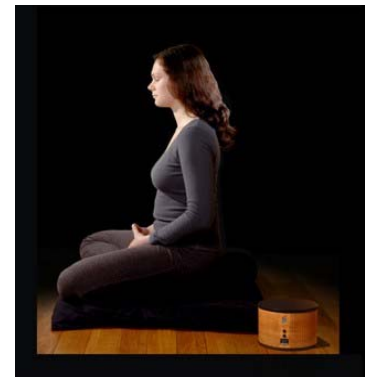
Mark Bouckoms is a highly respected Yoga and Qigong teacher who has been studying, practicing, and teaching for over twenty years in New Zealand and internationally. Mark originally trained at the Himalayan Institute (U.S.A.) in 1982, and continued his studies with Iyengar teachers and at the Kaivalyashrama Institute in India. Later he went on to become a Naturopath and Massage Therapist. As well as studying Vipassana and Insight meditation, Mark has co-taught retreats and Yoga teacher training programs with Donna Farhi. Mark is certified in the style of Qigong, characterized by flowing movements, called Sheng Zhen Wuji Yuan Gong. In 1990, he opened the Qigong and Yoga School of Sumner, New Zealand, which specializes in personal practice programs.

### Preparing Yourself for Meditation

As we enter our meditation practice, it is often a challenging transition moving from an active busy life into stillness. In presenting these gentle movements, we offer a gateway to a comfortable physical seat.

The focus is centered around the region of the pelvis, hips, and lower back. By creating ease in this area, it enables us to rest in the energetic and transformative centre of our being.

The movements are practiced lying down allowing our body to be supported and relaxed. As a result, our mind and nervous system can begin to quieten, opening to a receptive and sensitive meditative state.



**one.** Begin by lying in a supine position, scan through your body and observe your contact with the floor. Remain in a supine position, bending your legs, feet to the floor, knees vertical to the sky. Place your legs so the muscles of your thighs are passive. Bring your attention to the navel and lower back and let your breath expand into this area.

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**one.a** Imagine your lower back and sacrum resemble the face of a clock lying on its back. Begin to tilt your pelvis from the 12 o'clock position (lower back) to the 6 o'clock position (coccyx). Reverse the movement and repeat 8 times. The movement is like a small wave – gentle, uninterrupted, slow and steady. Keep your pelvis in contact with the ground during the movement.



**one.b** Change direction moving from the 3 o'clock position (left hip) to the 9 o'clock position (right hip). Let each side lift slightly and roll from side to side. Focus on the movement of your pelvis, keeping your legs passive. Notice the quality of movement on each side, investigating with a sense of ease. Repeat 8 times to each side.



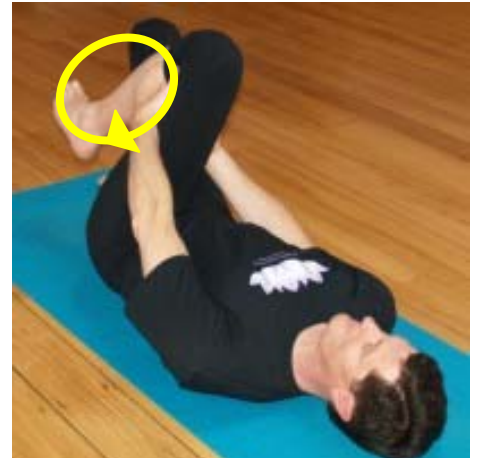
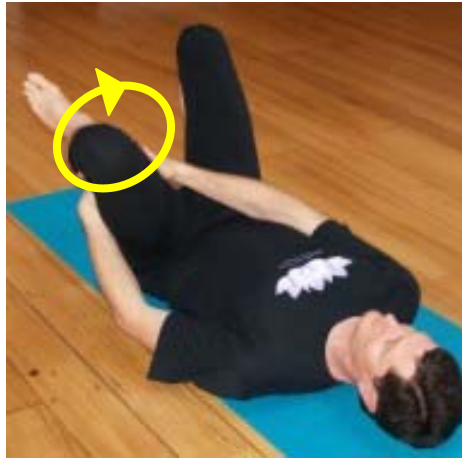
**one.c** Combine both of the previous movements exploring moving around the clock face both clockwise and anti-clockwise 8 times. Release legs to floor and observe contact with ground. Notice any change from your first observation in the supine position.





**two.a** From the supine position, return to bent leg position. Bend your left knee towards your torso. Position your hands on the back of your left thigh (just above the back of your knee). Guide your knee towards your torso as you exhale. Release pressure as you inhale. Your body and breath move together. Repeat 8 times.

**two.b** Same position – think of your hip as the centre of a circle – move your leg in a circular movement, clockwise and anti-clockwise. The circle can be either large or small. Repeat 8 times to each side.



**three.** For this movement, your head and neck should be comfortable and supported.

Still in the bent leg position, place your left leg in a right angle position with your lower shin resting just above the right knee. **Make sure it is the shin and not the ankle.**

Use your hands to massage and relax the muscles of your left upper thigh and hamstring.



**three.** Now bring the left hand through the inside of the left leg, the right hand around the outside of the right leg. Interlock your fingers around the back of the right leg raising your right foot off the floor. Move your legs towards you as you exhale. Release pressure as you inhale. **If you have difficulty reaching your leg, use a belt to hold the back of your leg.** Repeat 8 times on each side.

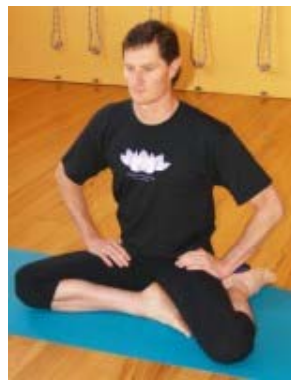
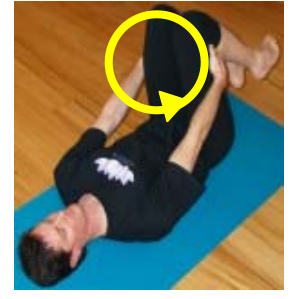
**four.a** Move your feet so they are slightly wider than shoulder width. Position your arms at shoulder height, vertical to the sky, fingers interlocked and palms facing towards you. Allow your body to move from side to side – leading the movement from your navel centre. Let your pelvis move freely. Inhale to the centre and exhale to the sides. Repeat 8 times to each side.



**four.b** Continue with same body position, move your arms and legs in opposite directions. Begin by moving your head with your arms and then try moving your head with your legs. As with all the movements – slow and steady – this movement creates a gentle rotation of your spine. Repeat 8 times.



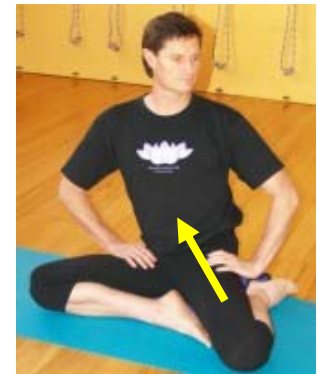
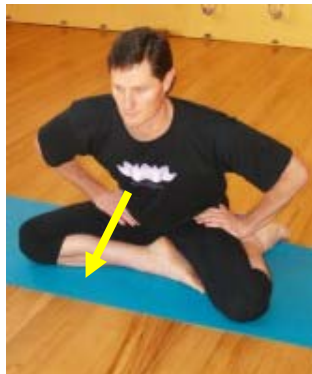
**five.** Bend both knees towards your torso, feet off the floor, hands beneath the back of knees. Slowly roll from side to side, massaging your lower back. Let the movement evolve into a circular roll similar to moving around the clock face (one.c). Finish by rolling on to your right side and moving to a sitting position.



**Six.** Fold your left leg to the back of your pelvis, your right leg to the front. **If your knees are not in contact with the ground, use a support under your buttocks.** Begin by tilting your pelvis in the direction of your right knee. Repeat several times back and forward and then change direction to the left by a few degrees. Start again, tilting your pelvis back and forward.



Each time you change, you move gradually towards your left knee. **Make sure you initiate movement from your hips rather than your upper body.** Once you have moved in a semi-circle from right to left, reverse the leg position and start again. Begin by tilting your pelvis back and forward in the direction of the left knee, eventually moving in alignment with the right knee.





**seven.** Rest your hands on the floor behind you so that your upper body can relax on the support of your arms. Position your legs slightly wider than shoulder width, feet on the floor. Keep your right knee in a vertical position and roll your left leg and hip towards the right knee, with the left knee moving in the direction of the floor. Reverse – Left knee vertical, right knee and hip rolling to the left. Allow your upper body to roll and relax with the movement. Repeat 8 times both sides.



Now position yourself for meditation with a new sense of ease and lightness.

**We sincerely hope that you enjoy these movements and that you find them a useful tool in preparing for meditation.**

**You may even wish to pass this e-booklet on to a friend and we are happy for you to do that.**

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